

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For More Information Contact

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BREAST CANCER SCREENING REMOVES FEAR OF NOT KNOWING

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

(RICHMOND, Va.)—When it came to getting screened for breast cancer, Angela Gregory was, like a lot of women, scared. The Chesapeake mother of three put off getting a mammogram because she was afraid of what might show up on the X-ray.

“I think a lot of women don’t get mammograms because they fear what might be told to them,” Gregory said. “I’d rather know and take care of [a problem] before it gets too far out of hand.” Her mammogram, which was negative, “has removed a lot of the fear that I had.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) a mammogram is the best way to detect breast cancer in its earliest, most treatable stage when the cancer is confined to the breast, one to three years before a woman can feel it. The five-year survival rate for breast cancer found in its earliest stage is 97 percent, according to the National Cancer Institute. If diagnosed at a later stage, when the cancer has spread to other organs, the five-year survival rate drops to 23 percent. What’s more, annual screenings may help increase the survival rate of breast cancer.

Gregory is one of 5,945 women who received mammograms and Pap tests last year through the Virginia Department of Health’s Every Woman’s Life program. The program provides breast and cervical cancer screening and follow-up tests to low-income Virginia residents who are 40 to 64 and have limited or no health insurance. Treatment may also be covered for those women who are diagnosed with cancer through the program.

The program has screened 15,000 women since it began in 1997. The number of screenings rose dramatically in the past three years due to an increase in the number of screening sites, emphasis on public education, and streamlined intake procedures.

To ensure that the screening message is spread deep into local communities throughout Virginia, the program employs a network of community health workers. The community health workers are trained lay people who act as the bridge between the clinic and the patient to relay important information about breast and cervical cancer. Currently, there are 15 trained community health workers working with the Every Woman’s Life program.

The services offered by the Every Woman’s Life program are critical to women statewide just like Angela Gregory, who had her mammogram so she can be here to help her children when they need her.

To learn more about the Every Woman’s Life program, visit www.vahealth.org/breastcancer/index.htm.

(more)

Editor's note: The following are some of the providers who participate in the Every Woman's Life program.

Winchester

Winchester Medical Center
Carol Carroll
540-336-7822

Chesapeake

Chesapeake Health Department
Teresa Sparks
757-382-8710

Roanoke

Carilion Health System
Kathy Womack
540-224-4964

Eastern Shore

Eastern Shore Health Department
Charlene Gholson
757-787-5880 x 249

Richmond

Bon Secours Richmond Health System
Nancy Malone
804-545-1952

Harrisonburg

VaLiance Health
Sheri Bang
540-433-5292 x 33

Newport News

Riverside Health System
Fran Holcomb
757-594-3075

Danville

Pittsylvania-Danville Health Department
Verna Burnette
434-432-7232 x 240

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